1;Gabb N-5 (1873-1874) 1876
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ON THE INDIAN TRIBES AND LANGUAGES OF COSTA RICA.

BY WM. M. GABB.

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Chapter I.

General Ethnological Notes.

The Indians of Costa Rica, with the hardly probable exception of the Guatusos, all belong to one closely allied family. I only make this possible exception in deference to the almost absolute ignorance which yet exists in regard to this isolated tribe.

Before entering on the consideration of the better known peoples of the southern part of the Republic, it may be as well to make a brief summary of what is known of the Guatusos up to the present time. They occupy a part of the broad plains north and east of the high volcanic chain of North-Western Costa Rica, and south of the great lake of Nicaragua, especially about the head waters of the Rio Frio. I have fortunately fallen in with various persons who have entered their country, and who have had an opportunity of seeing the people and their mode of life. The stories of some are so evidently exaggerated that I shall suppress them; but by carefully sifting the evidence and giving a due preponderance to the testimony of those whom I consider most reliable, I have arrived at the following results.

Thomas Belt, the author of "The Naturalist in Nicaragua," says he has seen of them, five children and one large boy, "and they all had the common Indian features and hair; though it struck me that they appeared rather more intelligent than the generality of Indians." He also says that "one little child that Dr. Seeman and I saw in San Carlos in

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R 114 tion ever yet accumulated with reference to the Guatusos. I have carefully rejected many wonderful stories told me by persons claiming to tell what they saw, and have only availed myself of the accounts of those who seemed to exaggerate least, or whose position forbade me to doubt their assertions.

T ●[101] 175 648 The tribes of Southern and South-eastern Costa Rica are better known. The Terrabas, living on the Pacific slope, and their neighbors, the Borucas or, as they call themselves, Bruncas, live under complete subjection to the laws of Costa Rica, and the rule of a missionary priest. They may be strictly called civilized. But those on the Atlantic slope have had a powerful ally in the forces of nature, in resisting the civilizing efforts of

T [132] [137] the Spanish invaders. The heavy rains of the Atlantic seaboard produce a luxuriance of vegetation that may well nigh be called unconquerable. Broad swamps, dank and reeking with malaria threaten the European with bilious fever, fatal to energy if not to life. Three centuries ago Columbus sailed along the coast from the Bahia del Almirante, and in his usual florid style called this the Rich Coast, and yet it has never yielded to the conqueror or paid him tribute. Two centuries ago a little colony was planted far back in the mountains and one or two outlying missionary posts were scattered among the then powerful tribes. But a just retribution fell on San José de Cabecar. The hardy mountaineers did not submit to the oppressors' yoke like the gentle and hapless victims of Cuba and Santo Domingo. Even now the traditions are well preserved among them, and I have listened to more than one recital of outrages which I dare not believe to be exaggerated. Father Las Casas tells of even worse oppressions. In 1709 the people rose and massacred all who fell into their power. A pitiful remnant escaped from the colony, to wander for weeks in the woods and finally a handful reached Cartago. The Viceroy of Guatemala, in retaliation sent forces by way of the forest trails from Cartago and others across the mountains by way of Terraba. They surrounded, killed, and captured all the Indians they could, and carried their prisoners to Cartago. Some of these were divided among the settlers as servants, and have left a strong tinge on the cheeks of many a would-be high-toned Costa Rican.

T [191] The remainder were settled in the villages of Tucuriqui and Orosi, where, though partly civilized, they still retain their original language, badly corrupted with Spanish. Since this disastrous ending to the colony, both parties have kept up a wholesome dread of each other and no further efforts have ever been made to found a colony on the Atlantic side of the country. At the same time, the Indians not only dread, but hate the

T 609 648 Spaniards and even a trace of Spanish blood, or fluency in the language on the part of a dark-skinned or dark-haired person is a warrant for suspicion. It is not a hatred of the white race. Englishmen, Americans, and Germans are invariably respected and treated well, by the same people who are either insolent to the Spaniard or treat him at best with restraint.

000 On the Atlantic slope, there are three tribes intimately allied socially,

1:Gabb N-5 (1873-1874) 1876
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On the Atlantic slope, there are three tribes intimately allied socially, politically, and religiously, but differing markedly in language. The Cabecars occupy the country from the frontiers of civilization to the western side of the Coen branch of the Tiliri or Sicsola River. Adjoining them, the Bri-bris occupy the east side of the Coen, all the regions of the Lari, Uren, and Zhorquin and the valley lying around the mouths of these streams. The Tiribris, now reduced to barely a hundred souls, live in two villages on the Tilorio or Changinola River. It is said that on the head waters of the Changina, a large fork of this latter stream, there are yet a few individuals of the Changina tribe, but the other Indians report them as implacably hostile and their very existence is only known by vague reports of their savage neighbors. The Shelaba tribe, formerly living on the lower part of the same river is now entirely extinct. A few half-breeds are all who perpetuate the blood, and their language is utterly lost. Still further down the coast, beyond the Costa Rican boundaries is another allied tribe, partly civilized, in so far as that they trade and work a little and drink a great deal of bad rum, spending most of their earnings on that bane of the race. They are called by foreigners Valientes. Crossing over to the Pacific slope, the Terrabas are tribally identical with the Tiribis. The tradition still exists in a vague form, that they are emigrants from the Atlantic side; but when or why the emigration took place, is forgotten. The home of the tribe is in a very narrow, rough cañon, traversed by a river that might better be called a torrent, a country strongly contrasted with the fertile plains and broad savannas of Terraba, and it is not improbable that under the press of a crowded population several migrations took place. They still tell how, twenty or thirty years ago, a priest came over from Terraba, baptized all who would submit to the rite, and by glowing stories of the abundance of meat and other inducements that he shrewdly imagined would tempt them, carried off over a dozen of their best men, who never returned. A glance at the vocabulary will show how little separated are these two branches of the tribe in language. The Borucas or Bruncas, who occupy a little village, not far from the headquarters of the Terrabas, are apparently the older occupants of the soil; perhaps crowded into a corner by the invaders.

Other tribal names are mentioned by various authors, such as Bicelas, &c. The name Bicelta is not known in the country, and, although used to the present day outside of the Indian country, is unknown to them, or at best, is supposed to be a Spanish word. The district of that name is probably the western part of Bri-bri, the most eastern point to which the slave-hunting expeditions from San José Cabecar penetrated. The Blancos are properly the Bri-bri tribe, but this word is rather loosely used, and is often applied alike to the Cabecars and Tiribis.

But little can be gathered of the history of these people. What happened in the times of their grandfathers is already ancient history and partly forgotten. All recollection of the first arrival of the Spaniards is now lost. They have no traditions of the use of stone implements before the introduction of metal. When asked what they did for axes before the traders

2:Skinner E-5 (1917) 1920
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Bribri

CULTURAL POSITION AND ORGANIZATION

The Bribri, according to Sapper,[3] Brinton,[4] Thomas and Swanton,[5] and Pittier,[2a] belong to the South American rather than to the Mexican and North American culture group. According to Pittier, the tribe is divided into two groups, the Tubor-uak[6] and the Kork-uak or Djbar-uak. These moieties were exogamous and matrilineal, and were divided into the following clans:

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TUBOR-UAK

Suritz-uak, Deer clan.
Dutz-uak, Bird clan.
Bokir-uak.
Dojk-uak.
Sark-uak, Monkey clan.
Dogdi-uak, Snail-shell-River clan.
Orori-uak, Ravine-of-the-Arari-River clan.
Kugdi-uak, Ravine-of-the-Uren-River clan.
Tkiut-uak, Flea-house-site clan.
Duri-uak, Bird-ravine clan.
Arau-uak, Thunder-house clan.
Urijk-uak, Ant-eating-Bear clan.

KORK-UAK, OR DJBAR-UAK

Djbar-uak.
Di-u-uak, Water-house clan.
Tkbiri-uak, Snake-ravine clan.
Kos-uak, Precipice clan.

3:Stone E-5 (1945) 1949
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Boruca

GEOGRAPHY

131 THE country of the *Boruca* lies in the southeastern section of Costa Rica (see fig. 1, frontispiece) starting from the upper end of the flood plain of the Río Grande de Térraba, or, as we prefer to call it in the present paper, the Diquis River. *Diquis* is the older 103 appellation, and is the name most frequently used in Costa Rican geographies, being an Hispanic form of the *Boruca* words *dik*, meaning "water" and *krit* or *krjta*, meaning "large." It is from this also that the term *Río Grande* or "Large River" has evolved. The name *Térraba* is more recent, and is due to the one-
● [101] time important community of *Térraba* Indians who were moved to the upper reaches of the Diquis River from the Talamanca region around 1700 by Fray Pablo de Rebullida.[1]

131 The land of the *Boruca* follows the river northward on both sides to a short distance above Curré. This territory includes the section of the Changuena River on the east, and most of the Cordillera Bruqueña, which is the Maritime Range, on the west and east. 162 Within this limited area, the *Boruca* have five 361 settlements. The largest of these is Boruca with forty-seven houses, and three hundred and thirty-four inhabitants, the majority of whom can be classed as Indian without *ladino* or white

[Text continues on top of page 3-B]

EARLY

101 What was included in the original territory 175 of the *Boruca*, we cannot say. The term, which we find spelled *Burucac*, appears to have been first used by Juan Vázquez de Coronado in a letter to the king, written in 1563.[2] He unfortunately does not delimit their location. It is obvious, however, that they formed a single unit or tribe. Throughout the early literature, allusion is made to the *Borucas as indios infieles y de guerra*,[3] who apparently fought with many of their neighbors as well as the Spaniards. Later during the Conquest, the term was applied to

[Text continues at bottom of p. 3-B]

[1] Fernández, 1907, tom. IX, p. 502; tom. III, p. 327, footnote 8. Peralta, 1938, p. 425 gives the date 1697 for the transferal of these people.

[2] Vázquez de Coronado, 1908, p. 37.

[3] See Fernández, 1907, vol. VIII, pp. 99, 462.

3:Stone E-6 (1945) 1949
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Boruca

GEOGRAPHY

mixture. The next largest community is Palmar Norte, on the western bank of the Diquis River, at the start of the flood plain. This has a population of one hundred and seventeen Indians, but, unfortunately, many *ladinos* are seeping in due to its proximity to the farms of the United Fruit Company and the Costa Rican town of Puerto Cortés (formerly "El Pozo"). There is one other large village of Indians, Curré, on the western bank of the Río Grande. This is the northernmost settlement of the *Boruca*, and has one hundred and three inhabitants, and fourteen houses. The other sites might well be called by the Spanish term *aldeas* or hamlets. Lagarto, also on the western bank of the river, has fifteen Indians and three houses. The rest of the tribe is scattered in locations which should be classed as *ladino* towns, such as Maíz, which was once all Indian, but now has only twenty-six Indians, Puerto Cortés which has fourteen, and Buenos Aires which has seven, some of whom are not pure. According to the census taken by the school teachers in Boruca, there are about twenty-five Indians who live isolated in the forest, many on the banks of the Changuena River, making a total of six hundred and forty-one *Boruca* Indians in 1945.

HISTORY

a province on the Pacific coast which apparently extended from the territory of the *Quepos* Indians to the River Chiriquí Viejo in Panamá.[4] Around the year 1608, or a little earlier, Fray Alonso de la Calle went alone to the *palenques* or fortified houses of the *Boruca*, and succeeded in converting and pacifying them. Fray Alonso appears to have gathered some of these Indians and formed a town.[5] Certain it is that by 1649, there was a town known as Boruca,[6] and by 1666, the term *Boruca* had ceased to be associated only with the people of that name, but included

[4] See Peralta, 1900, pp. 82, 218; Fernández, 1886, vol. V, p. 428.
[5] Fernández, 1907, vol. VIII, p. 99.
[6] Fernández, 1907, vol. IX, p. 364.

101 175 also various tribes from the south and the adjoining coast who formed part of the reduction of *Nuestra Señora de la Concepción de Boruca.*[7] The town of Boruca, which is not the same town we know today, was founded to the north of the present site,
[continued p. 4-B, first paragraph]

PRESENT GROUPS

As we know them, the *Boruca* are a composite group, apparently inhabiting only a small section of their former domain. The peoples who are now represented by the
[continued p. 4-B, second paragraph]

LANGUAGE

197 There are, unfortunately, no vocabularies of the original Boruca tongue. The present language is a mixture of the speech of the various peoples who form the modern *Boruca* Indians. The majority of linguists associate Boruca, even in the heterogeneous state in which it appears today, with the Chibchan dialects.[11] Lehmann divides the Chibcha into an eastern and a western branch, beginning the latter with the Cueva-Cuna with whose
[continued p. 4-B, third paragraph]

NEIGHBORS

101 The present neighbors of the *Boruca* are largely *Talamancan* tribes, the *Térraba* in the immediate north, and the *Ujarrás* (*Cabécar*) and the *Salitre* (*Bribri*) still farther northward. A few *Changuena* are rumored to exist along the upper reaches of the Changuena River where they probably settled in the seventeenth century.[13] Some *Boruca* say that these *Changuenas* are "enchanted," and cannot be seen; others that they have seen them. All of the *Talamancan* peoples were brought into this area from the Atlantic area in the early part of the eighteenth century by Fray Pablo
[continued p. 4-B, fourth paragraph]

ACCULTURATION

177 648 Since the appointment of a Spanish Magistrate, a *corregidor*, for Boruca toward the second half of the eighteenth century,[14] the
[continued p. 4-B, last paragraph]

[7] Fernández, 1907, vol. VIII, pp. 421–25. For the date, 1666, see p. 425.

[8] Fernández, 1907, vol. VIII, p. 424.

[9] Lehmann, 1920, vol. I, p. 20.

[10] Lehmann, 1920, vol. I, pp. 151, 195, lists all of these people with the exception of the *Abubaes*, as forming the modern *Boruca*. The *Abubaes*, however,

near the savanna known as "Mano de Tigre" today. Here, various tribes, including the *Coto* were moved into the vicinity by the Spanish priests,[8] until in 1749, even the *Quepos* Indians were brought into the area and formed part of the community.[9]

PRESENT GROUPS

Boruca were at one time neighbors and, to some extent at least, enemies. The *Boruca* today include the *Coto*, *Turrucaca*, *Burucac*, *Quepos*, and the *Abubaes*.[10]

LANGUAGE

speech he also sees a resemblance to the *Boruca*.[12]

In connection with the name, *Boruca*, the Indians today do not use this term, but call themselves *Brunka*. *Brunka* is composed of two words, *brun*, meaning "ashes," and *ka* or *k-a*, meaning "within." Their town, however, they call *Boruca*. *Brunka* is singularly absent in the older documents of the Conquest and colonization, apparently coming into use around the nineteenth century.

NEIGHBORS

de Rebullida, as stated above. Here they have remained, isolated from their original territory, each group distrustful of the other. The *Boruca* distrust in particular their neighbors the *Térraba*. They get along best of all, but not very well, with the *Ujarrás*. Even within the Boruca community this isolation is evident. The women seldom visit each others' houses. As much as a year may pass without one going to the house of a neighbor, but, when they do, they are very garrulous, and enjoy gossiping and laughing, seated on their little four-footed benches.

ACCULTURATION

Bruncas, *Brunkas*, or *Borucas* began to lose their own culture and personality. The slow acculturation of these people by the Costa

also should be considered as part of this group. See Fernández, 1907, vol. VIII, pp. 421, 424.

[11] See Mason, 1940, pp. 86–87, and the linguistic map of Johnson, 1940.

[12] Lehmann, 1920, vol. II, p. 71.

[13] See Fernández, 1907, vol. VIII, p. 424.

[14] Fernández, 1907, vol. IX, p. 363.

4:Pittier de Fabrega B-5 (ca. 1900) 1903
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FOLK-LORE OF THE BRIBRI AND BRUNKA INDIANS IN COSTA RICA.

THIS is, I believe, the first attempt to collect the tales and legends still preserved among the Costa Rican Indians. My primary object in compiling them was to obtain original texts for the study of the languages of the tribes mentioned, and a few of these texts, all belonging to the Bribri, have already been published in German, in the "Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien."[1]

As far as our very imperfect knowledge of the history of the aboriginal inhabitants of Costa Rica allows us to admit, the bulk of the population consisted at the time of the Spanish conquest of five or six main groups, differentiated essentially by their languages. The *Chorotegas*, in the peninsula of Nicoya, belonged to a northern stock, as did the small *Nahua* colonies scattered among them. The *Votos* or *Corobicies* occupied the low plains along the San Juan River and the northwestern end of the main cordillera; they are still represented to-day, at the headwaters of the Rio Frio Valley, by the ill-fated Guatos, whose complete disappearance is a question of only a few years. The *Huetares*, *Huetares* or *Guetares* extended all over the central part of the country; they have become extinct, or are mixed up and lost among the present half-bred or Spanish population in the densely inhabited strip between Port Limon and Puntarenas; but far to the east, in the valleys which originate in the highest region of the cordillera, and descend towards the Caribbean Sea (Chirripó, Estrella, Tarire, Coen, Arári, Uren), there still live in an isolated state about 1500 of their descendants, divided into the two chief groups of the *Cabécares* (including the Chirripóes and other scattered families) and the *Vyceitas*, *Blancos*, or *Bribri*. The *Tirub*, *Térribes*, or *Térrukas* formed another stock, once powerful, but reduced to-day to a miserable handful located near the headwaters

[1] H. Pittier de Fábrega, *Die Sprache der Bribri Indianer in Costa Rica*, etc. 1898, vol. cxxxvIII.

4:Pittier de Fabrega B-5 (ca. 1900) 1903
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of the Tararia, and to the small and somewhat intermixed colony of Térraba in the Diquis Valley, on the Pacific slope. On this latter side of the country and south of the Huétaru were the *Quepos* and the *Brunka* or *Cotos;* the first have now disappeared entirely, and may have belonged to the Huétaru stock. The Brunka still number from 300 to 400, and live together in the comparatively flourishing settlement of Boruca, near Térraba, in the Diquis Valley.

The Bribri have been the object of my special attention for some years past, and among them I have collected most of the legends and traditions I am now preparing for publication. Nos. 1–5 of the following tales belong to them. Nos. 6 and 7 have been obtained from the Brunka. Nos. 1–6 have their origin in the heathen past of our Indians, while the legend of Don Pedro Cascante belongs evidently to a period when the Christian influence had already made itself felt. Nos. 1–4 give us an idea as to what the primitive religion of our Costa Rican Indian was like: a supreme and almighty God, *Sibú*, surrounded by secondary divinities, *Sórkura*, *Jáburu*, etc., some of them good, others evil ones, and both eternally playing tricks upon each other. The notion of all men having been born from seeds like the plants is original and possibly new, as well as the continuous fighting of the genii, good and bad, for the possession of these seeds. No. 4 is especially interesting because of the rôle played by the skunk, that favorite and artful trickster of the North American Indian legends. Among the Bribri and Cabécara Indians, the skunk is also a prototype of cunning and subtlety, and he figures in several other tales which I have heard, but have not been able yet to record.

I. HOW JABURU ATE THE SEED[1] OF OUR KIN.

Surá, the good God, had gone to see his cornfield. While he was away, Jáburu, the evil One, came and ate the seed of our kin which the almighty Sibú had given Surá to take care of. When Surá returned home, Jáburu murdered him, and buried his corpse in a hole behind the house; on the grave he planted a cacao-tree and a calabash-tree.

Then Sibú, the almighty God, resolved also to kill Jáburu. Moving away, he went to Jáburu's house, and talked to him: "O Thou, uncle of mine, let us have our chocolate!" But Jáburu replied: "I

[1] According to the traditions of our Costa Rican Indians, every man or animal was originally born from a seed like that of a plant. The seeds of the several races of man were kept in baskets which were intrusted by Sibú to the keeping of the good deities. The evil ones, on the other hand, were constantly hunting for them, and this was the origin of continuous incidents, the relation of which has come down to the heathen Indians of to-day in the form of legends like the present one.

5:Urcullu M-5 (1763) 1913
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101 131 There are seven tribes of those heathens who are known as *Talamancas;* the first is that of the same name, which embraces two others called *Cabécara* and *Biceyta;* the second is called *Térraba;* the third, *Thósar,* on account of living upon an island of that name on the coast of the North Sea;[11] the fourth is named *Changuen;* the fifth is called *Zeguo;* the sixth, *Thorasque,* and the seventh, *Guaymi.* Of these the last three are in the districts of the Kingdom of *Tierra Firme,* and the first four in this district of *Guatemala.*[12]

721 [411] The Indians of all these tribes are generally brave and warlike; for their most common exercise is to go about with bows and spears practicing for their wars, which they are generally engaged in with each other for the purpose of enslaving the men and carrying off the women. The sport and diversion of the boys is [868] [959] to shoot arrows and throw spears and they thus become very skilfull in the handling of them.

291 [286] All the men of these tribes go entirely naked, only the *Talamancas* covering their private parts with girdles. The women all wear the girdle down to the knee, or use a blanket, which they weave from cotton or with *mastate* (a bark fibre) which they get by cutting trees.

304 [302] The greatest sport of these barbarians is to paint themselves black over the whole of their bodies, which they do with the greatest hardiness, allowing themselves to be scarified by the experts whom they have among them, and over the bleeding places they put *copal,*[13] which makes them swell up, and some even die by being cut in delicate parts, such as the face, neck and elsewhere. When they kill an enemy in war, they make a 304 hole with a peg of strong wood and they drill the cartilage of the 554 nose, as well as the lower lip; and when they have opened these two holes they put in each one of them a little bone like a cigar-

[11] The island of *Tójar* or Island of *Colón.*

[12] The enumeration which Padre Urcullu made was not strictly correct, [114] inasmuch as the *Zeguas, Thorasques* or *Dorasques* and *Guaymies* lived wholly or in part, like the *Guaymies,* in the territory of *Costa Rica;* but it will be noted that besides, according to his statement, the Island of *Colón,* and consequently the *Bay of Almirante* belonged to *Costa Rica.* M. M. P.

[13] *Protium copal.*

FOREWORD

121 101 [177] 115

THESE pages present the life of two indigenous groups, the Cabécares and the Bribri, who number among the first-known inhabitants of Costa Rican soil. They are people in varied stages of acculturation, but many are now taking part in the national environment and life of the republic.

There are numerous informants who helped with the gathering of details which have contributed to the making of this book. Among these were two young teachers, Teofilo Mayorga, a Cabécar from Ujarrás, and Gabriel Figueroa, a Bribri from Salitre. Both took down the linguistic texts in phonetics and aided in the literal translations. Saturnino Ortiz and Marcos Ortiz, also from Salitre, and Herman Villanueva of China Kichá supplied much important data.

There were two medicine men whose aid was invaluable, Telesforo Figueroa, Bribri, and Victor Challe, Cabécar, and the late Bribri Burier, Jaime Ortiz.

To these, to Roger Thayer Stone, and to the countless others who cooperated in the preparation of this text, among whom figure Agnes Gamboa, Francisco Amighetti, and Naomi Stratton, the author renders profound gratitude.

Doris Stone

San José, Costa Rica, 1960

[P. V]

6:Stone E-5 (1956-1959)1962
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[P. 3(A)]
[pp. 1-2 contain no textual material]

GEOGRAPHY

131 COSTA RICA is a relatively small country consisting of 50,900 square kilometers of land, the greater portion of which is rough, mountainous terrain. The heart of the republic is the Central Plateau where the bulk of the population is of Spanish descent with little indigenous blood and where the soil is highly cultivated or turned into pasture land.

Eastern Costa Rica, however, is, for the most part, forest with concentrated nucleuses of diverse aboriginal groups (fig. 1). The southern littoral of this section is formed by the 131 133 plain of Talamanca which geographically includes the region from the Reventazón River to the actual border with Panama. The long ridges of the Talamanca Range, one of the highest in Central America, commence at the eastern bank of the Reventazón River and run southward from the plain, rising to a maximum elevation of 3,583 meters. There are only a few 131 difficult passes across these mountains: a trail 133 from Cabagra on the Pacific slope to the upper Lari River, habitat of the Bribri Indians; a trail 487 from Ujarrás on the Pacific side to the upper Coen River, the dividing line between the Bribri and the Cabécares; and a trail from Canaan northwest of the General Valley to the Chirripó River, which area is also the home of

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 3(B) - GUAYMÍ]

HISTORICAL ORIENTATION

175 **Regional Terminology.** The word Talamanca 103 is not indigenous. It first appears in documents referring to the founding of the Spanish town ●[101] of Santiago de Talamanca, in 1605, by Diego [35] de Sojo, who chose the name in honor of his own birthplace.[2] The site he picked was in a valley known in 1605 as Duy or Guaymí (both of which were also names of provinces)[3] but which earlier was called Coaça. The first re-

[TEXT CONTINUES BOTTOM OF P. 3(B) - GUAYMÍ]

[115] [1] The identification of these trees and grasses was made by Dr. Paul J. Shanks, forester, who accompanied the writer on a field trip from Ujarrás to Cabécar and the Talamanca Valley.

[2] See Fernández, 1886, vol. V, pp. 116–30; Lehmann,

6:Stone E-5 (1956-1959)1962
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[P.6(A)]

101 **Peoples:** *Names and Location.* Such complicated terminology with respect to geographical extensions leaves little hope for too clear a presentation of the inhabitants of this area. [635] The ancient provinces of Duy and Guaymí included the northwestern section of Panama which was in part the home of the Térraba Indians. These people will be treated only in connection with history and tradition in this study in spite of the fact that in historic times there was a small group on the Zorquín River.[22] In the actual report, we use the term Talamanca as an all-inclusive word for the Bribri and the Cabécares. There are between [162] two and three thousand of these people on the Caribbean side, and approximately 1,595 on the Pacific.

Panamanian Border to the Coen River. Many names are listed in the documents pertaining to the area from the Panamanian border to the Coen River in Costa Rica. Among these, the commonest are: Ara, Ateo, Abicetaba, Blancos, Biceitas or Viceitas, Korrhué, Ucabarúa, and Valientes. To be sure, most of these terms are spelled in various ways according to the period and the author. These peoples were found between the Urén, Lari, and Coen rivers and in the plain of the Tiliri or Sixaola River, at least as far as Punta Cahuita.[23]

This entire group seems to have been closely related although they were not all one original people.[24] Collectively, they were the first to be known as Talamancas in the early 17th century, and today are called by this name or by that of Bribri.[25] It is interesting to examine these ancient designations because certain ones are associated with peoples now extinct, while others have a definite inference in modern terminology.

The groups that have now disappeared are

[103] [22] Lehmann, 1920, vol. 1, p. 218. This is also a Mosquitia name. The Bribri term is Choli.

[23] Lehmann, 1920, vol. 1, p. 219. We do not include here the Sicuas or Zeguas who were also found on the north coast. They were known to be of Mexican extraction. For an account of these people *see* Lothrop, 1944.

[24] Lehmann, 1920, vol. 1, pp. 219-20.

[25] *See*, e.g., the reports of the Franciscan fathers toward the end of the 17th century. The distinction is clearly made between Térrabas, Cavécares (Cabécares), and Talamancas. *See* Fernández, 1886, vol. V, pp. 369-74.

101 the Ateo, Korrhué, and Ucabarúa. The Korrhué, however, seem to have been originally a Cabécar clan conquered by the Bribri.[26] The [103] name Ara or Arari still signifies in Bribri the upper Lari River, and in a certain sense can mean the inhabitants of this region although as a name it is not applied to the people.[27] Here a settlement known as Bribri is located. The term Biceita or Viceita seems to have its source in that of the Abicetaba who were a Bribri clan[28] and, even though not used in 1959, is understood in Costa Rica as the Bribri. Blancos and Valientes were loose terms as Gabb has correctly shown. Blancos sometimes included the peoples on the western side of the Coen, while Valientes more correctly was applicable to the inhabitants of the eastern portion of Chiriqui Lagoon or Almirante Bay.[29]

Bribri is unknown in the early documentation, but as Pittier points out, the word is derived from *dęri-dęri* which he states means "brave" or "strong."[30] In 1959, the Bribri still insist that their name comes from *dererri* meaning "strong" or "hard" and that "brave" is *ensú*. Lehmann[31] notes that during the years 1590–93 the terms *Vrivri* and *Taquetaque* signified to the Guetar of Cuquerrique (Tuquerrique) "Lords and sons of lords." When we remember the tradition that the Bribri conquered at least the Cabécares (*see* Non-Documental History), there is ample reason for these statements.

Western Bank of the Coen River to the Reventazón. On the western bank of the Coen River and continuing through the Tarire to the Reventazón rivers were many names, including the Cavécaras (Cabécares), Urinamás, Siruros, Moyaguas, and Chirripó, with a people called Estrella in the coastal area.[32] The only ones of this group, with the possible exception of

[26] Lehmann, 1920, vol. 1, p. 220.
[27] In the Bribri tongue, *ara* means "you." *ará* means "a child."
[28] Lehmann, 1920, vol. 1, p. 219.
[29] Gabb, 1875, p. 487.
[30] Pittier, 1898, p. 16.
[31] Lehmann, 1920, vol. 1, p. 219. It should be remembered that Spanish is a phonetic language and even today *v* and *b* are by mistake used interchangeably. In colonial times they were confused more frequently. *See also* Fernández, 1907, vol. VII, p. 392.
[32] Thiel, 1896–98, p. 47. For a more detailed list *see* Lehmann, 1920, vol. 1, p. 221.

101 Moyaguas of whom nothing is known, who do not seem to be Cabécares are the Urinamás, although as early as 1709 they spoke the Cabécar tongue.[33] Pittier and Lehmann associate them with the Bribri although it is difficult to understand the reason for such classification.[34] The Urinamás are always named in the documents referring to the 17th and 18th centuries as distinct from the Cavécaras (Cabécares) and Talamancas.[35] Cabécar is used today for the group west of the Coen River although Talamanca is also an all-inclusive term to cover both the eastern and the western peoples. The Chirripó are a Cabécar branch and are found in the mountains and valley of that name. There are a few families in the upper Estrella Valley who are related to the Cabécares.

There is relatively little mention in the source material of the significance of the term Cabécar. According to the actual Indians, the name comes from *kabé* (quetzal) and *ká* [136] (place). There are quetzals in the high moun- [133] tain country but not in Cabécar itself which has an altitude of only 400 meters. It is inter- [262] esting that these people eat quetzal whenever they have a chance.

175 **Non-Documental History of Talamanca.** As Gabb has pointed out, it is difficult to gather information regarding the history of these tribes.[36] From the Spanish accounts available, we find that upon their arrival there was a Mexican group which dominated the Sixaola or Talamanca Valley, and that the Franciscan [797] fathers in particular noted the linguistic differ- ences in certain regions. There is no colonial 174 documentation which cites the aboriginal conquests and we are forced to accept traditions and what we can glimpse through the customs of the existent peoples to indicate at least some of the remote happenings.

One of these events appears to have been the conquest of the Cabécares by the Bribri with the result that the secular head of both groups had to be Bribri, but the intellectual leaders

[33] Fernández, 1886, vol. V, p. 458.
[34] Pittier, 1898, p. 16; Lehmann, 1920, vol. 1, pp. 216, 219; Fernández, 1886, vol. V, pp. 385, 445–46, 460.
[35] *See*, e.g., Fernández, 1886, vol. V, pp. 381, 389.
[36] Gabb, 1875, pp. 487–88.
[37] Gabb, 1875, p. 488. The Tiribis are the same [101] people as the actual Térrabas whose homeland is the

174 [721] continued to be Cabécar. Gabb[37] was the first to mention this as well as to recount the tradition of war between the Bribri and Tiribis which ended in 1827.[38] As a consequence, the winning Bribri became the political rulers of [643] Talamanca. From this phenomenon, a King of Talamanca evolved.

643 [642] At the time of Gabb, one family had the "hereditary right of chieftainship, and up to 1873, the reigning chief had theoretically full powers of government." [39] The chief was followed at his death by the best-suited person in the royal family, not necessarily the son. The situation in Talamanca at this period was so complex that a number of candidates for the position, all blood relatives, appeared. Each "King" was woefully lacking in preparation and was too firm an addict of alcohol. A sailor from Baltimore, Mr. John H. Lyon, who went to Talamanca in 1858 looking for fortune, fell in love with the country and made it his home. He had an Indian family and acquired such a strong position among these people that the Costa Rican government finally asked him to accept the task of governing the Talamancas.[40] For the purposes of the present study, it is worth noting that the memory of the "King" still remains and the clan to which the "King" belonged has continued as a mixture of Bribri and Cabécar (*see* Social Organization).

643 648

● 101 **The Southern Side of the Talamanca Range.** South of the Talamanca Range two names are associated with the region under discussion, the Coto and the Turucaca as we noted before. None of these peoples exist today although their blood remains in that of the composite Boruca of southeastern Costa Rica.[41]

In this area, however, on the very slopes of the range, are two settlements of Bribri and [361] one of Cabécares, while in the General Valley, west of Potrero Grande, a small group of Cabécares are located in China Kichá (Orange Root) [42] at the confluence of the Pejibayal with the General River.

[101] upper Changuinola River in Panama, and who inhabited at one time the Zorquín River.

[37] *See* Fernández Guardia, 1918, p. 127.
[38] Gabb, 1875, p. 489.
[39] Gabb, 1875, pp. 489–91.
[40] Stone, 1949.
[42] *Kichá* also means "string or rope."

101 361 [162] The two Bribri groups are to be found at Cabagra [43] and Salitre (*Ŝeri*) and amount to approximately 895 people. Cabagra lies near the pass to the upper Lari beside a river bearing its name which is an important tributary of the Diquís. It is about four leagues from Potrero Grande. The exact date of the arrival [174] of Bribri here is not known although it was probably at the end of the 19th century as many of the older inhabitants were born on the Lari and Urén rivers. One tradition holds 173 that certain families fled across the Talamanca 166 Range because they had not adhered to clan regulations in marriage. It is perhaps of sig- [614] nificance that very few clans form the groups in both places, and that as people, they are the first to divert from ancient tribal customs. Another popular belief is that Berchi, a king of Talamanca, caused numerous people to flee because of his extreme cruelty (*see* Folklore: *Recent History*). Some inhabitants of Cabagra moved westward to Salitre. Gradually, both places have grown as a result of the arrival of other families from the northeast as well as an increased birth rate.

At the end of the pass from the upper Coen is Ujarrás of the Cabécares which was settled for a similar reason at the same general time. [582] It is said that "the King of Talamanca prohibited marriage between brothers [44] and one couple who had disobeyed the rules fled and went to Ujarrás." Others followed to the ex-

[Text continues top of P. 8(B)--Gudrys]

LANGUAGE

197 **Connections and Previous Studies.** The majority of linguists connect both the Bribri and the Cabécar tongues with Chibcha.[45] However, they are sufficiently removed from one another that they are not mutually interchangeable. The intellectually more advanced, but at [191] the same time conquered, Cabécares generally understand and speak Bribri with exception of

[Text continues bottom of P. 8(B)]--Gudrys

[103] [43] This name has no meaning in any existing tongue. The site should not be confused with N.S. de la Luz [747] de Cabagra which was founded in 1745 by the Franciscan fathers and settled with Térraba Indians two leagues from San Francisco de Térraba. Fernández, 1907, vol. IX, p. 504.

[44] It should be remembered that these people are organized on the basis of matrilineal clans. (*See* Social

173 tent that this small valley could not support
166 the inhabitants. Some left for the site of China Kichá and there were joined by more people from Talamanca. We estimate that there are
[162] about 700 Indians within the area of Ujarrás and China Kichá.

● 101 144 **Other Sites.** There is a relatively strong percentage of Talamancan blood remaining in the people of the Reventazón Valley, but there are none of the Talamancan living habits left. Here at Orosi, and farther north at Cachí and Tucurrique, are descendents of the Cabécares from the Coen region. Tres Rios, in the Central Plateau, was originally settled by Bribri and Cabécar Indians brought there by the colonial government in 1747.[46] Similarly, at Cangel in Guanacaste, there are some few Bribri relationships.[46] The presence of this blood in these areas is due to the transferral of many Talamancans by the government of Costa Rica as penalty for four uprisings, the first three between 1610 and 1619 and the last in 1709, which resulted in the destruction of the Franciscan missions and the massacre of Spanish men and women.[47] In these sections of displaced peoples, acculturation has been triumphant and there is next to nothing to suggest the aboriginal connections of the inhabitants of these places beyond the ordinary characteristics of the mestizo.

648 167 101 [669] [799] [177]

LANGUAGE

197 [191] the Chirripó who are not neighbors and have little or no contact with Bribri. Few Bribri, however, do the same with Cabécar. In this respect, nevertheless, it should be pointed out that the vocabulary used by the Bribri when dealing with sacred subjects, prayers, or myths is almost totally Cabécar. Ancient songs, on the other hand, are often sung by the Bribri

[533] [784]

Organization.)

[46] Fernández, 1907, vol. IX, pp. 491–92.

[46] Fernández, 1889, pp. 379–90.

[47] Fernández, 1883, vol. III, pp. 325–26, fn. 7; 1886; vol. V, pp. 162–215.

[46] Lehmann, 1920, vol. 1, pp. 178–356; Mason, 1940, pp. 76–77.

6:Stone E-5 (1956-1959)1962
SA19 Talamanca SA19

[P. 10 (A)]

Bribri
Cabecar

114 **Previous Studies.** There are few ethnological studies referring to these peoples. Gabb,[54] Pittier,[55] and Skinner [56] are the sources for the Bribri. The reports of both Gabb and Pittier are important in particular with respect to the account of religious customs and ceremonies which are no longer practised. Skinner emphasizes the material culture of this group in the first half of the present century.

There is far less information concerning the Cabécares. Outside of certain documents published by Fernández,[57] the invaluable report of Gabb, already mentioned, with reference to the Bribri, and the not-too-detailed account by Bishop Bernardo A. Thiel [58] of his own travels or of those who accompanied him,[59] little is available.

121 **Purpose of This Paper.** The purpose of the present study is to give a picture of the manner of living and the way of thinking of the Talamancan in 1956–59. In doing so, we shall take into consideration the two geographically distinct groups as each one demonstrates a different stage of acculturation.

[10]
[77]

184 **Locational Differences.** The manner of living
131 of the Talamancan people depends upon their geographical location. The northern side of the range is the most isolated, in spite of the valley. Here the rainfall is greater, the forest denser, and the terrain more broken and rugged.
489 Transportation is restricted to foot with the exception of the Talamanca Plain where a horse, dugout, or jeep can be used in parts. In
491 most of the region, bridges are non-existent and rivers must be crossed by fighting the current. In upper Talamanca and Chirripó hammock bridges of vines are used.

101 The inhabitants of upper Talamanca and
177 upper Chirripó have been isolated since con-
648 quest times and little attention was paid to the Sixaola Plain during the early days of the republic. In fact, until about 1916, only a handful of non-Indian people including a few Costa

[54] Gabb, 1875.
[55] Pittier, 1938.
[56] Skinner, 1920.

6:Stone E-5 (1956-1959)1962
[P. 10(B)]
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri
Cabecar

101 177 648 [166] Ricans, Englishmen, North Americans, and one German had lived in this area. The United Fruit Company, however, saw the value of the valley for banana planting. With the advent of the Company in 1912, the aborigines retired to the hills and did not re-enter the plain until Panama Disease killed the fruit crops and in 1930 the valley was abandoned. From 1930 to 1956, with the exception of the Union Oil Company workers who did not really penetrate the area of Indian habitation, few outsiders have settled. Within this number can be included some Jamaican Negroes and a scattering of Costa Ricans from the interior. The people of lower Chirripó have what might be termed a "marginal contact" with Jamaican Negroes and non-indigenous Costa Ricans in the valley of Zent which forms part of the Limón Plain, and in Moravia and Tuís, on the highway to Turrialba. Here Costa Ricans from the interior have extensive coffee, cattle, and lumber operations.

[131] The southern region differs from the Caribbean side. A horse can reach almost any house. There is less rainfall and more savanna land. [871] Good schools are available and the people have easier access to non-indigenous groups.

Although there are some Costa Ricans from the Central Plateau, most of the non-Talamancan inhabitants are Chiricanos, a mixed Indian, white, and black element which entered this region from Panama during the past century either because of political persecution or as fugitives from justice. In recent years, a few Costa Ricans from the interior and various North Americans have settled near Ujarrás and China Kichá.

177 184 101 The difference in geography, climate, and neighbors has, therefore, been responsible for distinctions in beliefs and living habits between one area and the other. Attention will be called to these differences when necessary. Otherwise, the two geographical divisions of the Talamancans will be treated as one.

177 **Acculturation.** As can be imagined, there are

[87] Fernández, 1883, vol. III, ftn. 10, pp. 334–39; 1886, vol. V, pp. 373–74.
[88] Thiel, 1927.
[89] Polakowsky, 1883.

6:Stone E-5 (1956-1959)1962

[P.36(B)]

SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri
Cabecar

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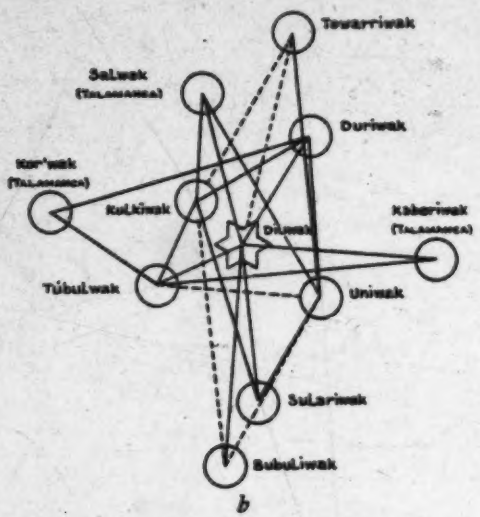

b

b, Eleven Bribri clans and their marriage relationships.

Key to the Diagrams of Clan Marriage Privileges and Relationships
Prepared by Dr. Gustavo Santoro, University of Costa Rica

clan where the dotted line stops at the circumference. These marriages are not reciprocal.

The central star represents the clan with the most numerous and varied privileges of marriage.

In the diagram, the distance of the circles from the star indicates in reverse the number of marriage possibilities of each clan.

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maintained by certain groups (*see* Tabus), the *túgwa* being one clan who can eat anything.

The Bribri tribe has a number of words which define more clearly their social organization. *séká* means "our place" and *sénukur* means "to live." *sésénukur* signifies "place where we live." *ká* also stands for Talamanca. *pé* or *ápé* means "blood" or "any people" in the sense of "us." *dítsə* means "seed." The people whom one can marry are called *suwəet* meaning "other group." [118]

[582]

[614]

101

On the Caribbean side, the Bribri word for clan is *séwak* meaning "our group or seed."

The Cabécares call the Bribri *bribriwak* while the Bribri use the term *kabékiwak* for the Cabécares. This can also be translated

[118] In the Cabécar, *dəsuwak* means "same group." *séberəetar* is "other group."

101 "Cabécar owners." The Cabécar call their language *səkʈə* or *sejekʈə* = our tongue. This is
192 composed of *sé* or *seje* (our), and *kʈə* (language). *je* is for the sound only. There are
614 still numerous clans, some of which are listed below.

The Bribri clans existent in 1954 on the Pacific side of the range are the following:

duriwak (bird water people)
diuwak (sun people)
kuLkíwak
uniwak (pot or vessel people)
bubuLiwak
sulariwak
túbuLwak [119] (*fiame* people)
towarriwak

The Bribri clans in the upper Lari region are:

tsiruriwak (cacao people. This is originally a Cabécar group and is found among the Chirripó).
kúmbuwak
kəberiwak (snake river people, by the Uren River)
ruLgikwak
kor'wak [120] (stagnant water is *kor'*) pronounced on the Caribbean side as korkwak.

Those Bribri clans by Amubré in the Talamanca Plain, are: [121]

saLwak — kəberiwak
duriwak — uniwak
túbuLwak

Bribri clans by Shiroli in the Talamanca Plain by the Sixaola or Teliri River, are:

síbawak — mediwak
miogriwak — brupawak
kəbériwak — túgwa (mixed, Bribri and Cabécar)

614 The *túgwa* seems to have been originally a
554 Cabécar clan taken over by the Bribri in parts
611 of the Talamanca Plain. It is one of the highest in rank, classifying in the Spanish sense as nobles. Because of this, exceptions seem to have been made, at least in the Talamanca Plain, for children may consider themselves members of their *father's* clan in spite of the
[851] fact that the father has married outside of his people.

[616] [119] Pittier, 1938, p. 19, claims that this is one of the two divisions of the Bribri tribe. He uses the spelling *túbor-uak*. This is a clan today.

[120] This is the other division of the Bribri according to Pittier, 1938, p. 19.